

*From the Heart...*  
by Deanna Genske, Executive Director

**Summer State of Mind**



Let's not rush through the remaining dog days of summer.

It's the season for relaxing and the pursuit of happiness. The wisdom of summer teaches us to be fully awake, engaged and open to everything around us. It's about being outside, whether on populated streets or deep in nature.

Summer is a state of mind. Whatever we do during its few months, summertime remains fixed in our collective consciousness. This is the season when many of our deepest memories are forged; it plays a starring role in the highlight reel of our childhood.

So... get out! Go camping or for a walk out in nature! Savor the cherries, strawberries, peaches, watermelon, funnel cake and ice cream. Gulp lemonade. Get wet, see an outdoor performance or two, watch movies and thunderstorms, enjoy a book while sitting under a tree! Let the heat encourage you to be sluggish so you have time to savor these pleasures. Waste time without guilt. 'Tis the season for lying in a hammock, sipping iced tea or a seasonal beverage, and staring up at tree limbs swaying in the breeze. Long hours of daylight mean more daytime to greedily partake in more of everything.

Time shifts in summer – there seems to be more of it while also going by too quickly. So, enjoy it and make some memories!

From the Heart,  
Deanna

**Ascend Services Mobile Work Crew Helping to Mix Things Up at Alpha Baking Inc.**



Chad and Brandon, Ascend clients, and Lisa, an Ascend Mentor, are working on opening boxed raisins and pouring them into the large white tubs. The raisins will then be mixed with cinnamon beads to make loaves of cinnamon raisin bread.



Destiny weighs the cinnamon beads and then mixes them into the raisins.

Our relationship with Alpha Baking began in October 2022. We provide mobile work crew services 2 days per week and have offered this opportunity to a total of 20 different clients up to this point. The purpose of the mobile work crew at Alpha is to put the ingredients together for the base of their cinnamon raisin bread. The crew opens boxes of raisins and dumps them into large containers and then adds a specific amount of cinnamon beads to the mixture. The crew also weighs out specific amounts of butter and lard for the mixture.

We appreciate the opportunity to work with Alpha Baking as it gives a different work experience other than a typical manufacturing environment.



Chad and Brandon crushing boxes.

## Ascend Services' Leaders Attend 2023 DSPN Advocacy Day in Madison

Marissa Fitzgerald, Program Director and Deanna Genske, Executive Director, attended the 2023 DSPN (Disability Services Provider Network) Advocacy Day & Member Engagement in Madison. Family Care providers are behind other employers in their ability to hire staff at competitive wages with full benefits. DSPN members have the greatest disadvantage with Medicaid as their sole payer. Many members turn to philanthropy to fill the disparity between reimbursement and the actual costs of services. This budget presents an opportunity to address systemic problems in Family Care and create an environment that attracts people to careers in long-term care. We were encouraged to meet with the legislators to discuss topics such as: Continuing recent provider rate increases and investments in the Direct Care Workforce Fund, Adequately fund a modernized and sustainable rate system for Family Care providers and The Use of Technology in Long Term Care Settings and Regulatory Relief.



Marissa Fitzgerald  
Program Director



Deanna Genske  
Executive Director

## Ascend Summer Youth Program is in full swing!

The youth summer program officially kicked off on June 12 and boy has the group been busy. Each week there are themes that are planned with activities i.e., Dairy Week, Nature Week, Hero Week, Sports & Getting Active Week, Cooking/Food week, Acts of Kindness, Arts and Crafts, Animal Week, Fun in our Community and Summer memories.

Thus far the clients have been enjoying different places around Manitowoc County: Farm Discovery, Pine River Dairy, Ledgeview, and Manitowoc County Fire Station. We are only part of the way through the summer and the youth have much more to do. Stay tuned for the fun they are about to have!





## Volunteers Help Spruce Up Ascend's Landscaping



### Lakeland Care

Volunteers from Lakeland Care participated in the Day of Giving by working on the landscaping at Ascend Services. It was a big project but they tackled it with ease! Thank you so much for all of your hard work!



### St. Thomas the Apostle Youth Group

A group of youth volunteers from St. Thomas the Apostle came to Ascend and to work on our gardens. It was part of their Mission Week. Hats off to these hard working young people. They did a wonderful job and it looks beautiful! Thank You to all!



## Ascend Employees Participate in Crucial Conversations Training



Deron Poisson, consultant, facilitated a class called Crucial Conversations to staff. The principle of this course was to provide tools and resources in the area of leading effective conversations. The theory when applied reminds one to start a conversation with your heart and to seek understanding before telling yourself a story in your head (jumping to conclusions). Three tools that were shared through this class that we all can use in our life:

- **Provide feedback that's candid but respectful.**
- **Use communication techniques that foster a dialogue.**
- **Keep communication lines open to avoid unresolved tensions.**

## Ascend Software Upgrade



Ascend made the decision to contract with SSR, (Superior Support Resources, Inc.), to assist us with analyzing our current software systems and determine what software would best serve our needs. SSR is committed to helping non-profit organizations engage and empower their communities. SSR has delivered a variety of solutions for non-profit organizations. They provide strategic and functional development of custom software designed to help an organization best serve its members' needs.

We hope to select new software by the end of the third quarter. The process of moving our data and integrating information will take 6-8 weeks. We are hoping to have a soft launch of the system by the end of 2023 with a hard launch in early 2024.

**Second Annual  
Toss With All Your Heart  
Bags & Brews  
Cornhole Tournament  
Register your team Today!**

**Ascend Axe & Golf Fundraisers  
Bring Out the Fun for Everyone!**

In mid April Ascend hosted their Throw With All Your Heart fundraiser at Tapped on the Lakeshore. This was the fourth year for the Axe throwing tournament which once again included local celebrity axe throwers. The day was filled with games, food and fun! Holla on Wheels food truck was on site with delicious treats. The first place winner of the event was team Van Horn, who took home the golden axe. Mark your calendars for next year April 13, 2024!



June 26 was the date of the Swing Fore Ascend Golf Outing! Despite the rain, the teams showed up and truly gave with all their heart. It was a fun day of golf competition, raffles, games, food and fun. Join us next year, same

course, The Golf Course at Branch River. The date is to be announced. We can't wait for another day of golfing fun!



**1st Place \$200!**  
**2023**  
**TOSS WITH ALL YOUR HEART**  
Scan to Register!  
**BAGS & BREWS**  
AT SABBATICAL BREWING CO.  
**CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT**  
**SABBATICAL BREWING CO.**  
**Sat., August 12, 2023**  
**NOON - 5 P.M.**  
To Register:  
Ascend Facebook Event or  
[ascendservicesinc.org](http://ascendservicesinc.org)  
SABBATICAL BREWING CO.  
835 S 29TH ST, MANITOWOC  
**Nettle Hill**  
2 - 5 pm  
**FOOD TRUCK**

Once again Ascend is partnering with Sabbatical Brewing Co. to raise money for Ascend Services 2023 fundraising goals. The second annual Toss With All Your Heart is coming up August 12th. The event will feature a cornhole tournament, live music from Nettle Hill from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., a special Ascend drink, raffles, prizes and more! Holla On Wheels Food Truck will be on site selling delicious eats. Come on out to enjoy the sun and fun! Registration is now open and you can register on the Facebook Event or on the website at [www.ascendservicesinc.org](http://www.ascendservicesinc.org)